In the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0013] on page 3 of the substitute specification with the following new paragraph [0013].

[0013] The invention relates to a tether system for TLPs including tethers having upper and lower pipe sections, in which the tethers having a reduced diameter towards the seabed. The invention is a concept for modifying today's technology for use in ultra deep waters. By introducing reductions in the tether diameter, the lower sections of the tether towards the sea bed will normally be negatively buoyant because of the considerable wall thickness necessary to withstand the hydrostatic pressure. The upper sections can more easily be made buoyant (due to less wall thickness), because the hydrostatic pressure is lower closer to the surface. This will help to balance the overall weight of the upper and lower sections.

Please replace paragraph [0016] on page 4 of the substitute specification with the following new paragraph [0016].

[0016] The reduction in overall diameter will typically be made in steps, with intersections between the steps. The number of steps will depend on the length of the tether (i.e., the depth at which the tether will be ~~used.~~ used). In-between each diameter, a transition piece carries the load. This is a well-proven detail from previous TLP designs. The tethers may have a gradual transition between the upper and lower sections instead of the above described steps, but such tethers are less likely to be used because such tethers probably will require a more complex manufacturing process.

Please replace paragraph [0022] on page 5 of the substitute specification with the following new paragraph [0022].

[0022] A tether with two steps (three sections) is shown on Fig 2. The figure shows three tubular sections, including an upper section (1), a lower section (2), and an intermediate section (7), interconnected with two transition pieces (3). The three tubular sections have ~~successfully~~ successively reduced diameters towards the sea bed. In other words, each section of the tether has a diameter smaller than the diameter of an adjacent section located farther from the sea bed.

Please replace paragraph [0023] on page 5 of the substitute specification with the following new paragraph [0023].

[0023] Figure ~~A5~~-5 is a graphic representation of tether pipe utilization.